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ABSTRACT

Compiled from information contained in the Program Year 1994-95 Annual Narrative Performance Reports submitted by states to the U.S. Department of Education, this paper shares selected information on recent developments in volunteerism in adult education. The paper is organized into three sections. Selected states are highlighted in each section. Section 1 focuses on use of Section 353 funds to provide tutor training and staff development to volunteers in these states: Arkansas, District of Columbia, Idaho, Nevada, West Virginia, and Virgin Islands. Section 2 describes collaboration--partnerships with both public and private organizations--in Connecticut, Missouri, and Texas. Section 3 describes volunteer roles and responsibilities that afford these advantages to adult learners and programs: lower cost services, more flexibility in class scheduling, more personalized instruction, more opportunities for mentoring and flexible pacing, greater availability of support services, and more access to the homebound. These states are highlighted: Illinois, Louisiana, Nevada, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Puerto Rico. (YLB)

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State Accomplishments in Volunteerism

Program Year 1994-95

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Office of Vocational and Adult Education
Division of Adult Education and Literacy
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State Accomplishments in Volunteerism

Program Year 1994-95

In Program Year 1994-95, over 90,000 volunteers served in Federally-funded adult education and literacy programs. About half of these volunteers worked as tutors on a one-to-one basis or in small group settings in basic literacy and English as a Second Language classes. The remainder served in supportive roles.

States which receive Federal funds under the Adult Education Act are required to submit annual performance reports to the U.S. Department of Education. This paper has been compiled from information contained in the Program Year 1994-95 Annual Narrative Performance Reports. It was written to share selected information and facilitate dialogue across the country on recent developments in volunteerism in adult education.

Descriptive information is not available for Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The following states did not report on volunteer activities: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The paper is organized into three sections: teacher training and staff development, collaboration, and volunteer roles and responsiblities. Selected states are highlighted in each section. For more information about specific volunteer activities in a particular state, contact the state's director of adult education.

Teacher Training and Staff Development

The Adult Education Act (P.L. 100-27), Section 353, requires each state to use at least 15% of the Federal adult education basic grant to support special experimental demonstration and teacher training projects. Many states use their Section 353 funds to provide tutor training and staff development to volunteers. In recent years, this training has become increasingly important, as programs give volunteers more extensive responsibilities in instruction and administration.

Arkansas

Adult education provided financial and in kind support for volunteers, cooperated with volunteer literacy providers, and equipped volunteer teachers and tutors with teaching skills. Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc. received a Section 353 grant in the amount of $49,575 to support volunteer training.

District of Columbia

Volunteer tutors were trained by Delta Adult Literacy Council, Inc.

Idaho

Idaho focused on providing more consistent and intensive training to volunteers. Through participation with the Northwest Regional Literacy Resource Center and the National Institute for Literacy, Idaho initiated training for volunteer tutors statewide. Boise State University's adult learning center provides an example of the importance of professional development for volunteers in the State of Idaho. This center reported that, "while the program recognizes the importance and value of volunteers, it has become increasingly evident that a volunteer program demands administrative time and supervision. Our philosophy in regards to volunteers is that they need to be able to deliver the same level of instructional quality as our paid staff. Consequently, the overall number of volunteers involved in the program has declined, but the number of volunteers actually teaching full semester classes or managing and teaching in outreach program sites has increased." The importance of volunteers in Idaho adult education is evidenced by the fact that many local literacy councils were initiated by the adult learning centers through the work of VISTA volunteers.

Nevada

Volunteer instruction has been enhanced through staff development activities and the development of the Tutor Competency Certification Program by the Nevada Literacy Coalition.

West Virginia

Through a grant from the Benedum Foundation, the West Virginia Center for Adult Literacy and Learning employed a volunteer literacy training specialist to coordinate and expand training services to volunteer literacy tutors.

Virgin Islands

One hundred seventy-six (176) volunteers were trained for literacy programs. Two adult education/tutoring literacy centers were established for residents on St. Thomas and St. Croix.

Collaboration

In order to increase program capacity and better serve adult learners, Federally-funded adult education programs are making greater efforts to collaborate through partnerships with both public and private organizations. These organizations include national volunteer non-profits, Federal and state volunteer agencies, businesses and public and private schools.

Connecticut

Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. is operating a hotline in collaboration with the State Department to provide information on adult education opportunities.

Missouri

Efforts were continued to establish stronger links between local ABE programs and volunteer literacy organizations. Thirty-five volunteer literacy organizations were identified in Missouri.

Texas

In Program Year 1994-95, 2,671 volunteers were assisting local programs. Since 1982, the state Board of Education has helped adult literacy councils to mobilize a private sector capacity that assists the adult education system in locating, counseling and teaching adults with low literacy

skills. Over 40 literacy councils are now in operation. At the local level, some programs are coordinating with VISTA and AmeriCorps volunteers. Close coordination is also in place with the state library and local libraries that have established literacy programs.

Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

The use of volunteers in instruction and administration affords a number of advantages to adult education learners and programs, including: lower cost services, more flexibility in class scheduling, more personalized instruction, more opportunities for mentoring and flexible pacing, greater availability of support services and more access to the homebound.

Illinois

The State Department encouraged the use of volunteers in almost every aspect of the adult education process. A total of 7,461 volunteers served in different capacities. Services included one-on-one and small group tutoring for educationally disadvantaged students. Approximately 6,652 students received services from volunteers. This number represents adults who were not enrolled in any instructional program.

Louisiana

Literacy Instructors Teaching Adults was continued as a part of the regular adult education program in Acadia Parish. The program was designed to provide basic literacy and survival skills to adult non-readers to enable them to function more effectively in the community and to train community volunteer tutors to work with adult non-readers. The tutoring sessions were conducted in various locations and facilities convenient to students.

Volunteer Instructors Teaching Adults, Inc. (VITA), a community-based volunteer literacy organization, was funded by the Bureau of Adult and Community Education to provide instruction to adults sixteen years of age and older who read below the sixth grade level. VITA offered approximately 24 community tutoring sites in the parish, and volunteers averaged 7-8 hours of tutoring per month. VITA also participated in literacy programs at the Lafayette Parish Correctional Center and in a workplace literacy program.

Nevada

A total of 460 volunteers served as tutors and aides. Not all programs reported using volunteers, but those that did reported that more than 7,000 hours were contributed.

North Dakota

Volunteers are trained and technical assistance is provided upon request.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania funds Tutors for Literacy in the Commonwealth, through the State Adult Literacy Act, to provide training and support to tutors and tutor trainees in literacy councils and other locations.

Puerto Rico

One special project was developed with the University of Sacred Heart at San Juan. Fifteen adult volunteers were trained in teaching techniques for reading and writing.